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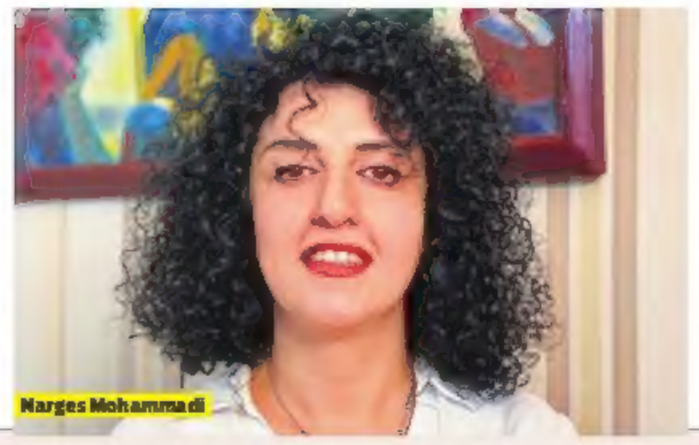

Narges Mohammadi

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IMPRISONED IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded on Friday to Narges Mohammadi for her decades-long fight against the oppression of women in Iran

CAMPAIGNER AGAINST MANDATORY HIJAB

The 51-year-old has spent much of the past two decades in and out of jail for her activism. Her latest incarceration began in 2021 after she attended a memorial event for a protester killed by security forces. Her activism continues in jail with her burning her hijab last month to mark the death anniversary of Mahsa Amini, who died after being arrested for violating Iran's dress code

SENTENCED TO 31 YEARS IN JAIL, 154 LASHES

- The Iranian government has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times, and sentenced her to a total of 31 years and 154 lashes
- The head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee urged Iran to release her. "I appeal to Iran: Do something dignified and release Narges Mohammadi," committee chairperson Berit Reiss-Andersen said | P12

143rd

IRAN'S PLACE IN WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S GENDER EQUALITY RANKING

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Inflation shock RBI's big worry, rate unchanged

Concern over extra liquidity in the banking system; benchmark repo rate kept at 6.5%

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.5% as expected, but the uncertainty around inflation weighed on its policy stance, which was aggressive towards both rates and liquidity.

Repo rate is the rate of interest RBI charges banks when the latter borrows money from the central bank to make up for shortage of funds.

Sounding caution on the inflation side, the RBI kept its inflation estimate for FY24 at 5.4%. "The overall inflation outlook is clouded by uncertainties from the fall in kharif sowing for key crops like pulses and oilseeds, low reservoir levels, and volatile global food and energy prices," RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which decides the policy rates, has flagged the risk of large and overlapping food price shocks on headline inflation, Das added.

The RBI has been keeping the policy rate at 6.5% for eight months now. "The longest transitory period in repo rate's history when it was kept on pause prior to a cut was 12 months, in 2014. A similar event can't be ruled out this time if the impact of food prices from lower kharif acreage does not impact RBI's forecast for overall inflation for the rest of FY24," said Debopam Chaudhuri, chief economist, Piramal Group.

The MPC feels that despite a 250 bps increase in repo rates from May 2022 to January 2023, the transmission of the increase to bank lending and deposit rates is still incomplete.

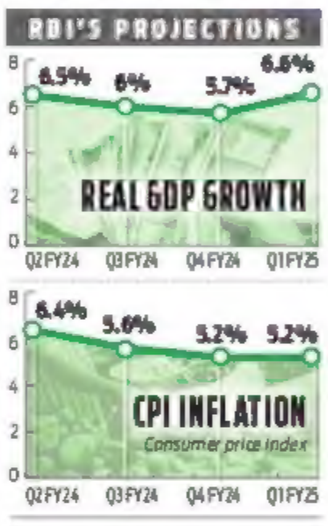
The central bank has also retained its earlier GDP growth projection of 6.5% for FY24.

Notably, Das reiterated that excessive liquidity in the banking system poses risk to both price and financial stability.

RBI had sucked out ₹1.1 lakh crore excessive liquidity through a temporary measure of incremental cash reserve ratio (I-CRR) announced on August 10. The I-CRR is slated to be withdrawn by 8 October, releasing excess liquidity.

The RBI has also said it may go for an open market sale of bonds to keep the liquidity in check. The likelihood of an open market sale of bonds led to a 15 bps jump in the 10-year government bond yield to 7.36%, its biggest rise in a session since 4 May. P13

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das



Excess Canadian diplomats 'exit'

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

WITH less than four days to go for the October 10 deadline to downsize its diplomatic strength in India, Canada reportedly shifted some of its 41 'excess' diplomats to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

The Canadian High Commission in Delhi, when contacted, refrained from making any comment on the transfer that was reported by CTV News, a private Canadian television network.

India has 21 diplomats in Canada while Canada has 62. The extra 41 were directed to be withdrawn, else they would be declared persona non grata. Most of them had been posted in Chandigarh and Delhi, according to a source.

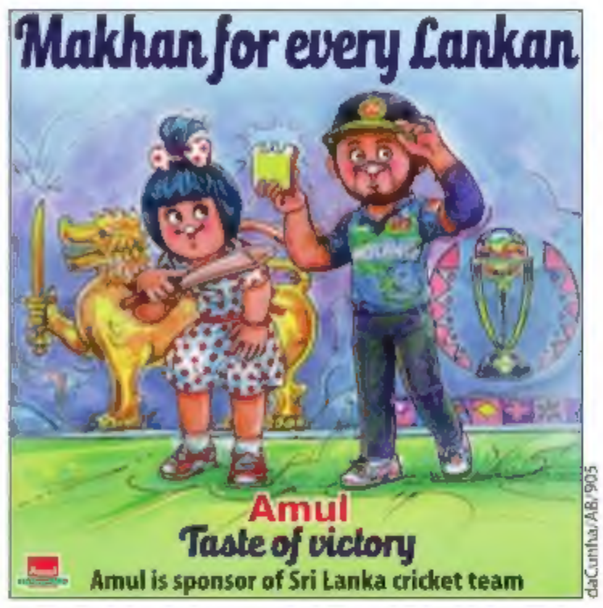
'No looking back till Canada does U-turn'

"Till Canada does a U-turn or offers a clarification clearing the air on India's involvement in the killing of the Khalistani radical, there can be no looking back," a source said

"Canada is not taking any chances hence the number of diplomats that are being considered in excess have been posted out. Some to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. It is unprecedented. It all began with Canada expelling an Indian diplomat," said a source.

India has been repeatedly telling Canada to rein in those accused of terrorist activities, which includes threatening Indian diplomats in Canada.

"We had to stop visa services for Canada as our diplomats were threatened. It wasn't safe for them to travel to the mission for consular services," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had recently said, adding Canada has a toxic mix of criminals, terrorists and traffickers. The diplomatic row began when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged that India was involved in the killing of Khalistani radical Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Following this, Canada expelled an Indian diplomat.



Despite Siddu's no, DKS bats for new liquor shops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chitradurga/Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar seem to differ on granting licenses for new liquor shops in the State. While Siddaramaiah had categorically stated that the government will not grant licenses to open new liquor shops, Shivakumar indirectly stressed the need for more such outlets to provide jobs to people.

Excise Minister RB Thimmapur too had stated that the government is considering a proposal to grant new licenses for liquor shops in the limits of gram panchayats which have a population of more than 3,000 people. This had evoked criticism from leaders of opposition parties and various sections of society.

"No we are not opening, who said we are opening? We will think about it, but we will not open," the minister said in response to a question by reporters in Chitradurga on Friday.

However, Shivakumar, who was in Ramanagara, stressed the need to open new liquor shops as no new licenses have been issued in the State in the past 30 years. If new liquor shops are opened, they will help provide jobs to many unemployed people, he said.

"In Karnataka, no new licenses for liquor shops have been granted in the past 30 years. Because of this, those having licenses are now selling each of them for Rs 4 crore to Rs 5 crore," he said.

"More liquor outlets means more people getting jobs. Where to open and when to open will be decided by the government. We will not decide to open liquor shops in every village. But one thing is sure, one can't stop people from drinking. The chief minister will take a decision on granting licenses for new liquor shops in the coming days," Shivakumar said.

Meanwhile, leaders of BJP and JDS, and women's organisations criticised the government after the minister stated that a suggestion to open new liquor shops was made at a meeting recently. However, no decision was taken on it at the meeting.

Former CM HD Kumaraswamy had accused the government of trying to mobilise funds for its guarantee schemes by opening more liquor shops in the State. The BJP and JDS termed it "liquor bhagya".

Farmer attempts suicide in front of central team

BELAGAVI: A farmer from Kalakuppi village in Bailhongal taluk attempted suicide in the presence of an inter-ministerial central team on drought on Friday. Appasaheb Yakkundi suffered crop loss and tried to take his life by consuming pesticide, alleging that the team did not listen to his problems. As the members were busy taking note of crop loss, Yakkundi rushed towards them with a bottle of pesticide. Before Yakkundi could drink it, policemen snatched it from him.

A video grab shows farmer Appasaheb Yakkundi trying to consume pesticide, even as he is stopped by officials, in Kalakuppi, Belagavi district, on Friday

'#isbaar100paar': India on the mark, as Asian Games takes final turn

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Hangzhou

WHEN it all started, #isbaar100paar seemed like a dream, almost. From an Indian perspective, the Asian Games began in an unsavoury way. Three wushu athletes weren't granted accreditations. In response, Union sports minister, Anurag Thakur, boycotted the Opening Ceremony. Two weeks later, India's sporting ecosystem can afford to celebrate as they will leave Hangzhou with at least the magical figure of 100.

Adding gold in the most romantic of Indian sports, men's hockey, was a cherry on top. Japan did not pose a threat in the four quarters India dominated and scored five. With this the team has secured Olympic quota as well. The badminton duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty were in sublime form to book historic final berth.

After beginning Friday on 86, they added more medals including a first-ever silver in men's team recurve. That's been one of the themes of these Games. The contingent has won medals for the first time ever in many disciplines (women's 5000m gold, 50m 3P gold, dressage medals, women's cricket gold to name a few). In all, they have picked up medals in 22 out of the 41 disciplines, including in chess when the medals will be handed out officially on Saturday.

Because they have picked up a substantial number of gold as well — 22 (as on Friday), six better than the previous 16 they managed at Jakarta five years ago — they are well placed to finish fourth on the medals table. This is set to be another historic achievement as India had never finished fourth or better since the 1960s. This number could swell on the final day of action on Saturday (there's no Indian interest on Sunday) as there are multiple finals lined up in archery, badminton, kabaddi as well as cricket. To recognise such an achievement, there is set to be a function with Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon after the contingent return after the Closing Ceremony on Sunday.

The mood music is in sharp contrast even a month or two ago when a series of governance issues in various administrations was making the headlines. Some players hadn't been sent, selection issues had to be sorted out by the court and athletes faced a nervous wait.

No wonder Bhupinder Singh Bajwa, chef-de-mission, couldn't hide his smiles. "It is a proud moment and I must thank our athletes for helping us realise this dream," he said while taking in the action from the wrestling hall on Friday. "Honestly, when we set the target of 100 medals, I did not believe we could achieve it, but once the 70-medal mark was breached, it gave an extra push to our athletes," he said. P15

India team celebrates a goal against Japan in the hockey finals on Friday | PTI

HANGZHOU HIGHLIGHT

Record tally for gold and overall

51 medals in just two sports (29 from athletics and 22 from shooting)

3rd time that India are set to finish inside the top four in terms of gold won. The last time they had finished in the top four was in 1962 Jakarta (third place)

EXPRESS READ

Putin calls for more say for India

Moscow: India, along with Brazil and South Africa, should be represented at the UN Security Council and their weight in making key international decisions should increase, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday.

Agencies get support to fight terrorism

New Delhi: The Centre on Friday assured full support in terms of legislative requirements and resource deployment to agencies to weed out terrorism from the country. Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla gave the assurance during an NIA conference here.

State to provide rabies vaccine free

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Health Department has directed all government hospitals to provide Anti-Rabies Vaccine and Rabies Immunoglobulin free as per requirement for all animal bite victims, irrespective of APL or BPL card. P3

SHUBMAN

UNWELL, COULD MISS SOME GAMES

Team India's worries ahead of its opening World Cup game against Australia have been compounded with Shubman Gill suspected to be suffering from dengue, rendering him a doubtful starter for Sunday's match.

Genuine cases of SC/STs lost due to frivolous petitions: K'taka HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

QUASHING the proceedings against a headmaster in a frivolous case registered by a teacher under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the High Court of Karnataka directed the State Government to recover Rs 1.50 lakh paid in aid to the complainant for repeated abuse of the process of law.

The court also directed the government to scrutinise papers before granting any aid so that the public money is spent only on cases faced by the SCs and STs and not by frivolous litigants. If no direction of this kind is issued, it would amount to putting a premium on the frivolous litigation, Justice M Nagaprasanna said while passing his order on a petition by Shivalingappa B Kerakalamatti, the headmaster of Shri Maradi Malleshwara School in Bagalkot district, questioning the case registered by Chandru Rathod, the teacher, over his reinstatement after he was dismissed from service in 2012, alleging certain omissions and commissions.

Referring to the 'B' report filed by Amingad police in 2020, the judge noted that it stated that the complainant is habitual and he has stock witnesses with him. Names of witnesses are also indicated in the 'B' report. He uses those witnesses for all his complaints. What shocks the court is that every time the complainant gets a case registered, he approaches the Social Welfare Department and claims aid to fight it. This public money was used to fight frivolous cases. It is for this reason that genuine cases of the SCs and STs are lost in the multitude of such frivolous cases.

TRAUMA TRIP

Auto driver assaults, robs hearing-impaired man

PRAVEEN KUMAR @ Bengaluru

IN a horrendous case that casts doubts on the security of lone passengers travelling in app-based autos, a 40-year-old hearing-impaired man was brutally assaulted and pushed out of a moving autorickshaw to be left paralysed and unconscious due to traumatic brain and spinal injuries and fractured ribs.

The victim, identified as Jeetendra B Shah, was also robbed of his wallet containing Rs 7,500, his mobile phone and hearing aid.

The incident took place in full public view around 10 am on Thursday after the vehicle left an auto gas-filling station near Metro Cash & Carry at Yeshwanthpur in Subramanyanagar police limits.

Shah, who works as a manager with an online bus ticketing platform, booked the autorickshaw around 9.30 am through an app from Majestic to the residential apartment complex on 2nd Main, Goraguntepalya, where he lives with his sister Ketki A Thakkar and her husband.

After filling gas and leaving the station, the driver allegedly asked Shah to pay him. When Shah took out his wallet, the driver allegedly snatched it. The driver also grabbed his mobile phone and hearing aid. He was then pushed out of the moving autorickshaw as it passed the road leading to Orion Mall.

It is yet to be confirmed whether Shah's severe injuries are due to the impact of the fall from the moving autorickshaw or whether he was beaten up. It is also yet to be established whether the driver had accomplices. Shah is yet to give his statement as he is in the ICU.

CONTINUED ON: P3